

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SR-02 ORM-01 AID-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 SP-02 PM-03 NSC-05 SS-15 CU-02 /080 W

----- 070364

R 171405Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1172

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUBUMBASHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NY

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, SREF, WA, ZA

SUBJECT: OVAMBO REFUGEES

REF: STATE 6264

1. EMBASSY HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING FOR PAST THREE MONTHS TO OBTAIN CLEAR PICTURE OF SITUATION REGARDING NUMBERS, WHEREABOUTS, AND NEEDS OF NAMIBIAN REFUGEES IN ZAMBIA. AIR-GRAM ON THIS SUBJECT IS UNDER PREPARATION AND WE HOPE SUBMIT IT SHORTLY ONCE REMAINING GAPS IN OUR INFORMATION HAVE BEEN FILLED IN.

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2. BASED ON OUR CONTACTS THUS FAR WITH LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

OF UNHCR, UN COMMISSION FOR NAMIBIA, SWAPO, AND ZAMBIAN
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, WE CAN PROVIDE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

A. CURRENTLY THERE ARE ABOUT 3,000 NAMIBIANS IN ZAMBIA, ALL
BUT ABOUT FOUR-FIVE HUNDRED OF WHOM HAVE ARRIVED SINCE MID-1974.
UN COMMISSION FOR NAMIBIA ESTIMATES THAT ABOUT TWO HUNDRED
NAMIBIANS ARRIVE IN ZAMBIA EACH MONTH ALTHOUGH NUMBERS HAVE
BEGUN TO THIN DOWN SOMEWHAT COMPARED TO ARRIVALS REGISTERED
LAST FALL. COMMISSION FOR NAMIBIA RECORD AN ADDITIONAL 100
EACH IN TANZANIA AND KENYA, 20 IN ETHIOPIA, AND 10 EACH IN
ZAIRE AND UGANDA. UNKNOWN NUMBER ARE IN ANGOLA WHERE MANY BLEND
INTO VILLAGES ALONG BORDERS INHABITED BY FELLOW TRIBESMEN.
PERHAPS 50-100 ARE BEING CARED FOR BY PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES
IN TRANSIENT CAMPS IN ANGOLA PRIOR TO THEIR ONWARD
MOVEMENT TO ZAMBIA. THERE ARE ALSO SOME 15,000
ETHNIC NAMIBIANS RESIDENT IN BOTSWANA FOR DECADES,
MANY OF WHOM ALLEGEDLY WOULD RETURN TO NAMIBIA IF
ALLOWED TO DO SO.

B. INFORMATION REGARDING THEIR LIVING CONDITIONS HAS NOT
BEEN READILY AVAILABLE. MOST APPARENTLY ARE STOPPING IN ZAMBIA'S
REMOTE WESTERN PROVINCE WHERE GRZ COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
HAS ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR 1,500 NAMIBIANS LOCATED IN TWO
CAMPS. OTHERS APPEAR TO BE RESPONSIBILITY OF SWAPO WHICH IS
KEEPING 500 OF THEM, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN UNDER 20 YEARS,
ON ITS FARM 25 MILES OUTSIDE LUSAKA. WE UNDERSTAND OTHERS MAY
HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY SWAPO INTO ITS MILITARY UNITS AND ARE
LOCATED AT SWAPO TRAINING CAMPS IN WESTERN AND SOUTHERN PRO-
VINCES.

C. IN ADDITION TO GRZ AID, NAMIBIANS ARE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE
FROM UNHCR. AID IS ALSO COMING FROM VARIOUS NORDIC COUNTRIES
IN FORM OF PREFAB HOUSING, EDUCATIONAL GRANTS, ETC. ACCORDING
SWAPO, FOOD IS NOT A SERIOUS PROBLEM, ALTHOUGH SOME OUTSIDE
ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING MILK AND SPECIAL FOODS FOR NURSING
MOTHERS AND SMALL CHILDREN MAY BE REQUIRED. PRIMARY NEED
IS FOR HELP IN ESTABLISHING AND EQUIPPING EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING
PROGRAMS AND FOR TOOLS AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS TO HELP
REFUGEES BECOME SELF-SUPPORTING.

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D. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN VARIETY OF REASONS FOR
THIS EXODUS OF NAMIBIANS, MOST OF WHOM ARE YOUNG
PEOPLE BETWEEN AGES OF 12 AND 24 BUT ALSO A FEW
SMALL CHILDREN AND MIDDLE-AGED PERSONS. REASONS
INCLUDE PERSECUTION OF SWAPO MEMBERS OR SYMPATHIZERS
AT HANDS OF SWA AUTHORITIES AND TRADITIONAL CHIEFS,
REFUSAL TO ACCEPT CONSCRIPTION INTO GOVERNMENT-
CONTROLLED PARAMILITARY FORCES FOR PATROL DUTIES

ALONG OVAMBOLAND BORDER, LACK OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND ENCOURAGEMENT BY SWAPO. ALTHOUGH SWAPO HAS DENIED TO US SOUTH AFRICAN ALLEGATIONS THAT IT INDUCING YOUNG PEOPLE TO COME TO ZAMBIA BY PROMISES OF SCHOLARSHIPS ABORAD, KNOWLEDGEABLE GRZ SOURCE HAS CONFIRMED THAT THIS HAS BEEN CASE IN AT LEAST SOME INSTANCES. FACT THAT SINCE MID-1974 PORTUGUESE HAVE CEASED TO PATRO ANGOLAN-NAMIBIAN BORDER AND ARE NOW ASSISTING RATHER THAN TURNING BACK THOSE REFUGEES CROSSING INTO ANGOLA HAS OBVIOUSLY FACILITATED EXODUS.

E. NO HARD INFORMATION CONCERNING TRIBAL OR POLITICAL TIES OF REFUGEES HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING. SWAPO CLAIMS THAT MOST OF THOSE REACHING ZAMBIA ARE SWAPO SUPPORTERS AND DISCLAIM ANY KNOWLEDGE OF BREAKDOWN BETWEEN OVAMBOS AND NON-OVAMBOS EXCEPT TO ASSERT THAT MANY OF LATTER ARE SWAPO ADHERENTS. IF WE ASSUME THAT 1,500 NAMIBIANS BEING CARED FOR BY GRZ REPRESENT PRINCIPALLY THE NON-SWAPO ELEMENT AMONG REFUGEES, THEN NUMBER OF THOSE WHO ARE SWAPO MEMBERS OR SYMPATHIZERS MUST BE RECKONED AT ABOUT HALF OR A LITTLE MORE OF THOSE IN ZAMBIA.

F. MALES AND PROABLY SOME FEMALES OF MILITARY AGE ARE APPARENTLY BEING RECRUITED INTO SWAPO MILITARY FORCES FOR TRAINING AT CAMPS IN ZAMBIA AND PERHAPS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. WE ARE TRYING TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS ASPECT BUT GIVEN ZAMBIAN AS WELL AS SWAPO SENSITIVITY IN THIS AREA CANNOT BE SURE WE WILL LEARN VERY MUCH.

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G. WE ASSUME SOME FUNDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND PERHAPS MILITARY AID ARE REACHING SWAPO FROM EASTERN EUROPE. SWAPO LEADERS ARE KNOWN TO BE IN CONTACT WITH EUROPEAN COMMUNIST EMBASSIES HERE AND ALSO VISIT MOSCOW AND OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN CAPITALS FROM TIME TO TIME. AMOUNT AND PRECISE FORM OF SUCH ASSISTANCE HOWEVER IS NOT KNOWN.

H. SWAPO CLAIMS THAT THESE PEOPLE FOR MOST PART DO NOT REGARD THEMSELVES AS REFUGEES BUT INSTEAD HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF RETURNING TO NAMIBIA ONCE THEY HAVE COMPLETED THEIR TRAINING. IN MEANTIME, THOSE OF SCHOOL AGE ARE SEEKING EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES EITHER IN THIS COUNTRY OR WHEREEVER SCHOLARSHIP ASSITANCE MAY BE AVAILABLE.

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